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SCHAKOWSKY SAYS OIL COMPANIES USING EXCUSES TO EXPLAIN OUTRAGEOUS GAS PRICES IN CHICAGO

WHOLESALE GAS PRICES DROP BY 30 CENTS SINCE FTC INITIATED INVESTIGATION LAST WEEK

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today said that in the week since the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) initiated its investigation into oil company practices, wholesale prices have plummeted 30 cents.

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During a meeting on Capitol Hill with members of the Illinois and Wisconsin Congressional delegations, oil company executives blamed the increase in gas prices in Chicago and Milwaukee on a host of causes including environmental standards, pipeline problems, patent issues, and taxes. However, those representing the industry failed to justify the sudden drop in the wholesale prices, even though nothing has changed since last week except for a formal investigation being launched by the FTC.□ Environmental Protection Agency Administrator (EPA) Carol Browner also attended the meeting.

"When we had our hearing in Chicago, the representatives of the oil industry blamed it on high taxes. Here, they were talking about supplies, patents, and pipelines. But their laundry list still does not add up to why consumers in Chicago are paying an extra 50 to 60 cents per gallon at the pump," Schakowsky said.□

"It is quite coincidental that when the EPA asked for an investigation by the Federal Trade Commission, we literally saw a plummeting of gasoline wholesale prices. Oil companies explain it away as just simple market forces. Consumers at the pump do not want to hear excuses. It is clear to me that price gouging is taking place and that the oil companies are punishing Chicago and Milwaukee for using ethanol.□ That is why I support the FTC investigation and am resurrecting the old button that I had from 1978: 'Stop Big Oil,'" Schakowsky added.